



CMR

COMMUNITY
MEDIA REVIEW

COMMUNITY MEDIA POWER TOOLS FOR CHANGE

The Journal of the Alliance for Community Media • Volume 22, No. 1

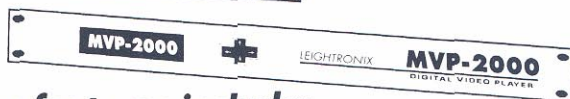
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 - Alliance Subscriber, \$350 - copies of all reports.

Direct membership inquiries to Rob Brading, Multnomah Community Television, 26000 SE Stark St., Gresham, OR 97038, telephone 503/667-7636, or email at rbrading@mctv.org

For the past 10 years, the Alliance for Communications Democracy has been fighting to preserve and strengthen access. Though the odds against us have been high, and the mega-media, corporate foes well-heeled and powerful, time and again we've won in the courts. We can't continue this critical work without your support. With the ramifications of the 1996 Telecommunications Act only now beginning to manifest themselves, we must be vigilant if we are to prevail and preserve democratic communications. If not us, who? If not now, when? Please join the Alliance for Communications Democracy today!

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COMMUNITY MEDIA REVIEW

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As the journal of the Alliance for Community Media, Community Media Review shall support the Alliance mission by providing: a comprehensive overview of past, present and future issues critical to the Alliance and its membership; vigorous and thoughtful debate on those issues; and a venue for members and like-minded groups to present issues critical to the Alliance.

A Commitment to Help Shape the Future

by **Bunnie Riedel**

Executive Director

Alliance for Community Media

In Fuzhou China, two brothers capitalized on an entrepreneurial idea. Chen Zhui and Chen Yan reckoned they could use free calls to the United States via the Internet to entice potential customers into their electronics store. They even went so far as setting up a phone service which sold calls to the United States at a fraction of the cost of the state owned monopoly, China Telecom. These efforts landed the two in jail and caused their equipment to be seized amid accusations that they were "endangering national security," and committing a "new type of a crime."

China stands at the brink of a telecommunications explosion unseen in the rest of the world. Its growth of the number of "fixed main" telephone lines is almost forty percent per year. Perhaps because of sheer scale of population and vast geography, only nine percent of China's people have routine access to a phone. At the center of China's entry into the information age stand old monopolies heavily protected by the state. It is a situation that has been described as "feudal." Fang Hongyi, a senior engineer with the State Administration of Radio, Film and Television, says "It is controlled by a small gang of people who are holding the whole country back."

The Chinese telecommunications monopolies and their refusal to open up their markets to competition stands in stark contrast to the merger mania going on in this country. As I write this article, a drama is being played out in municipalities affected by the AT&T/TCI merger. At question is whether broadband internet access will be open or closed. AT&T/TCI says access is open when consumers can use their @Home service as the gateway to other internet providers (as long as you pay) and we say consumers shouldn't have to be double-dipped or forced to buy an internet provider they don't want. The FCC insists that this is not a merger issue and local municipalities such as Multnomah and

We have proven what can be done when technology and funding are made available to meet community needs. We need to hold up these achievements and call for similar measures across technologies.



Portland (Oregon) have refused to approve the transfers because they view this issue as critical to the terms of the merger.

At some point in the not too distant past, wasn't there a promise made about "increased competition" and consumer options?

Competition and consumer pricing aside, in January the Alliance formed a "Position for Internet Access," which states in part that we "oppose any effort to stifle and limit the public's access to technology, information and media. Additionally we oppose defining proprietary control and ownership of transmission systems in ways that limit access to, and providers of, information."

I recently attended a forum which was billed as being about electronic access and bridging the "digital divide." Thinking I would be in a room full of people who wanted to discuss economic justice and how we move from an industrial-based economy to a technology-based economy while minimizing the casualties of such a monumental shift, I prepared my remarks to reflect the Alliance's position on "electronic green-space" and access for all. I was somewhat surprised to find the room filled with so many industry representatives and the focus to be on deregulation and against universal service. Listening to the other presentations, I nervously realized that the other conference participants were not going to like what I had to say. That thought was fleeting, however, as I realized that maybe the other conference participants needed to hear what I had to say. The model of Public, Educational and Governmental (PEG) access may not

be perfect, but at least it is based on an assumption that a certain portion of electronic media should be set-aside for use by, for and of the public. It is based on an assumption that communities and individuals will be empowered by access to media, thereby creating stronger communities and more capable individuals.

I shrink from drawing direct comparisons between the story of state monopoly control in China and the interesting state of merger mania going on in this country. There are many factors affecting either one, including cultural, social, historical, economic and political. But, the common thread which runs through these stories is that the future of either society will be greatly shaped by the free-flow of information or the lack thereof.

We are in a unique position in the access community because we have a track record of over 30 years of growth, development and delivery. We have proven what can be done when technology and funding are made available to meet community needs. We need to hold up these achievements and call for similar measures across technologies. Public, Educational and Governmental (PEG) access did not come about because the "market" provided it—it was fought for, demanded and rallied around. The pioneers of PEG were not content to wait for the crumbs from the table, they required a seat at the banquet. As we move forward, into convergence and the as yet unseen developments of the next few decades, we should commit to do no less. It is an exciting and extraordinary opportunity to be a part of shaping the future of our society.



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Technology Alone Won't Create Media Democracy

by Rob Brading

Alliance Chairman and Executive
Director of Multnomah Community TV

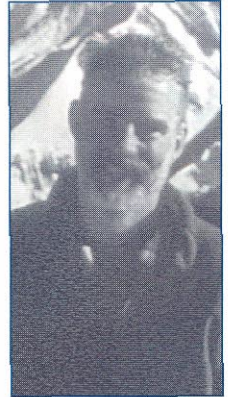
When there's less air in one of my car tires than in my lungs or the battery has less uumph than I do after a day at 17,000 feet, I spend more than a few minutes swearing. At my car. I doubt its feelings are hurt. I'm trying to communicate, but the car's not listening.

I don't know if trees falling in deserted forests make noise, but communicating, like tangos, takes two. My car can't interpret what I'm saying. If I were swearing at someone – a friend, a colleague, you – you'd interpret what I'm saying and that would give it meaning. The interpretation might not be what I intended and there might be more miscommunication than communication, but still we'd be communicating.

We stand on the near side of the digital phase of the electronic communications age and our ability to communicate, the way in which we communicate, and how we do so effectively has radically changed. We're told that electronic communications not only makes communications easier but will solve our communications problems. Rather than swearing at cars, convergence, data bits, compression and so on – and on – occupy our everyday conversation. But how many folks know a scuzzy drive from a firewire from a fire cracker? Or care? Technobabble seems to have replaced psychobabble as the language for the new millennium.

The folks who make those claims have a *Field of Dreams* philosophy. If you build it they will come. Dreamers believe that the vast and growing web of electronic communications – fax, telephony, the Internet, the Web, data communications, satellite transmissions – will rein-vigorate and heal our democracy, that apathetic and apolitical citizens will become energized activists who participate in and transform political life. For Dreamers the web of electronic communications does not merely enhance participation but becomes the actual agent of democracy. Democracy and participa-

People in the community media movement understand that technology by itself won't create media democracy, won't mend our societal ills. It's tempting to believe that technology by itself will create an electronic green space but history has convincingly demonstrated that...commercial interests will consume our electronic public green space.



tion will exist because of the electronic web.

For some Dreamers the electronic datasphere is even more. Economic, environmental, social, and even psychological problems will be eliminated by the electronic communications web. The world will be transformed. For these folks, we're destined to move from our material world to a virtual one. Being electronically connected will become reality.

In contrast to Dreamer techno-utopianism, people like Bill McKibben (*The Age of Missing Information*) and Daniel Kemmis (*Community and the Politics of Place*) believe that community is tied to a geographic place, that electronic communication technology can alter the course of community for the better, but successful communities are tied to place and the regular face-to-face interaction among human beings that comes from living together in the same place.

People in the community media movement understand that technology by itself won't create media democracy, won't mend our societal ills. It's tempting to believe that technology by itself will create an electronic green space. History has convincingly demonstrated that, as Bob McChesney eloquently stated at his key note at the Alliance's national conference in Milwaukee, commercial interests will consume our electronic public green space.

No technology is neutral and we can't trust any technology to benefit our com-

munities if we don't play an active role in determining how it's used. The form and shape of technology have consequences. That automobile, other than costing me a bundle every year, has a profound effect on my life, on collective fuel consumption, on the roads it's driven on, and on the sense of freedom the car has given us. That automobile alters our society, sometimes for the better and sometimes for the worse. There's no invisible hand that automatically makes technology work on our behalf.

The Alliance is about creating, preserving and nurturing that electronic green space. As the Alliance has grown as an organization, media literacy and community and economic development have taken a regular place in our conversation. Our very name tells us that we've moved as we've come to understand that being a Dreamer is not enough. We started out as a federation of television programmers. Today we've moved into the electronics and digital age and call ourselves the Alliance for Community Media. Our very name tells the us and the world that we're about more than television programming and more than simply providing access to technology.

Rob Brading is chairman of the Alliance for Community Media and executive director of Multnomah Community Television in Gresham, Oregon, rbrading@mctu.org, telephone 503.667.7636.

UP&COMING

April 29-May 1 – North West Regional Conference – Ashland, OR.

May 15-16 – Mid-Atlantic Regional Conference – Westminster, MD.

May 20-22 – *Cancelled* – Central States Regional Conference.

May 13-15 – South East Regional Conference – University of Tampa, Tampa, FL.

July 5-6 – Alliance national board meeting, Cincinnati, OH.

July 7-10 – 1999 Alliance for Community Media International Conference & Trade Show – Cincinnati.

October 21-23 – Central States Regional Conference. – Michigan City, IN.

November 17-20 – National board meeting, Tucson, AZ.

New Members Named to CMR Editorial Board

Lucille Frasca Harrigan and Wally Keniston were named to the *Community Media Review* Editorial Board at the national board meeting of the Alliance in March.

Their terms will run until November 2001.

Lucille is a consultant and free lance writer, currently working with the Montgomery [MD] County Council to research and make recommendations on the future of public, education and government access channels there.

Wally is cable access facility coordinator for Windham [NH] Community Access Television and the owner of a used book store.

Sponsors Needed for International Guests at July Conference

Interested in a global perspective on community media? You can do your part in support of international participation in this year's Alliance International Conference and Trade Show, 7-10 July in Cincinnati, by sponsoring a guest from abroad.

For details on what your center can do, contact Joyce Miller, Cincinnati Community Video, at 513.651.4171.

An international reception featuring video productions from abroad is planned for 10 July of the conference at Cincinnati's Aronoff Center.

Among the nations represented to date are Britain, Ireland, South Africa, Brazil, Italy, Sweden, Israel, Netherlands, and Germany.

Seeking Input

IMPACS – The Institute for Media, Policy and Civil Society [Vancouver, Canada] is working with members of the Canadian government to draft an operational framework to guide policy on media and peacebuilding.

IMPACS is looking at media development in pre-conflict, conflict and post conflict situations. If you have any articles, case studies, or thoughts on when it is appropriate to invest in media development as a peacebuilding strategy, contact Shauna Sylvester, Executive Director, IMPACS [Institute for Media, Policy and Civil Society], Suite 910, 207 W. Hastings St., Vancouver, B.C. Canada V6B 1H6; telephone 604-687-7408; fax. 604-683-8536; email at shaunas@impacs.bc.ca or sylvest@planeteer.com

A POSITION FOR INTERNET ACCESS

In the past few years, media and telecommunications companies have been merging at a break-neck speed.

Deregulation within these industries has created fewer and larger corporations, each providing a multitude of services across and within telecommunications technologies. Corporate control of these industries and these portals to information pose a challenge to public space, public dialogue and the public interest.

The recent merger of AT&T and TCI highlights an emerging trend toward exclusionary corporate control of the broadband infrastructure, the closure of access to information and the selective confinement of this access to affiliated internet service providers.

The Alliance for Community Media opposes any effort to stifle or limit the public's access to technology, information or media. Additionally we oppose defining proprietary control and ownership of transmission systems in ways that limit access of users to, and providers of, information.

Our advocacy of this position is rooted in a historic mission to uphold the First Amendment guarantee of free speech, a dedication to community control of local resources and a commitment to complete access to the widest diversity of information sources and services. This position is punctuated by our organizational emphasis on localism and the decentralization of communications media.

We advocate for a national policy which encourages the broad dissemination of information and knowledge to all people. Such a national policy spurs economic development, creates equal opportunity for all citizens and strengthens our democratic traditions. Experience has proven that the inequitable distribution of telecommunications widens the disparity of education, civic participation, economic growth and opportunity among our nations' citizens.

In any given locale, there is a danger that a single telecommunications delivery system will operate as a monopoly — limiting the development of multiple user options, suffocating competition and a free market structure. This free market structure warrants the defense of producers and consumers of communications services that are not affiliated with the operator or its parent corporation.

As a local franchise issue, the Cable Act provides that cable companies are to be responsive to the needs and interests of the local community. The Act assures that cable systems provide and are encouraged to provide, the widest diversity of information sources and services to the public. The Act recognizes and upholds the First Amendment rights of the public as viewers and as speakers.

Additionally, the Act permits municipalities to disapprove of an acquisition of a cable system that would eliminate or reduce competition in the delivery of cable services. This provision would include the power of the local franchise authority to place appropriate conditions on such an acquisition.

Decisions about internet access through the cable systems can be made at the local level as a matter between the franchising authority and the cable system operator. This focus on localism ensures that cable services reflect local interest and meet local needs.

Non-discriminatory internet access to cable systems should be no different than other access provisions in current federal law, such as "must carry" provisions, leased access, program access and Public, Educational and Governmental (PEG) access. The Alliance for Community Media views these provisions and local franchising as a simple and effective regulatory model which should be applied to all entities providing direct video services, regardless of federal regulatory status.

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What do you do for a living?" That question has been tough to answer in the land of community media. I describe public access and free speech, mention the training and television, skipping any references to cable TV since that sours the conversation. But I think I finally have an answer. I am a social servant and community organizer specializing in media applications. This issue of CMR is dedicated to all of you who help others use media as a power tool to dismantle myths and create community.

In the first article Kevin Maney paints an illuminating portrait "can we have too much bandwidth?" We all know the problem of too little. "Masters in Television" was included to demonstrate a template of using video for development applications worldwide. While Maney looks ahead at the bandwidth boom, Deirdre Boyle takes us back to the roots of our movement in her profiled book, *Subject to Change:*

Guerrilla Television Revisited. This history highlights our movement and provides context for the next wave of Internet applications. Bob Russell reminds us to seize microradio and Internet radio for community development with the same fervor of public access television. Citizens sharing – by all means possible.

Is the Internet a soulless medium? The National Endowment for the Arts and the Benton Foundation think otherwise by funding centers across the nation to introduce artists to the Internet. Jan Koopman explains the Open Studio Project. We go underground with Jeff Smith as he visits the Zapatistas in Mesoamerica where camcorders are wielded as guns to expose atrocities and build honest images to counter world opinions. A sidebar on the Centro de Mujeres Comunicadoras Mayas has me saving up to join indigenous Guatemalan women in a three-week seminar on documentary media work on the shores of Lake Atitlan. Community video training with a new twist is presented by Jessica Maria Ross as she applies progressive training techniques in a model program in Davis, CA. Rodrigo Assumpcao takes this issue home with a report from south of the equator about a community's initiative in providing citizen access to computer technology and sharing.

Power tools, power people, and powerful results – by all means possible.

— Dirk Koning, Editor-in-Chief

COMMUNITY MEDIA POWER TOOLS FOR CHANGE

Editor's note: The following article presents an interesting quandry...is there such a thing as too much bandwidth? The historical notion has clearly been no...never enough bandwidth. Just remember the early spin from the nuclear power industry...we will have so much energy streaming into our homes that it will be, "Too cheap to meter." Bring it on!

If you've been awed by the way computing power keeps rocketing toward the heavens, wait until you see what's about to happen to communications power.

People in the industry call it a bandwidth explosion. A stampede of new data communications networks that have astounding capabilities will be turned on over the next four years. The pace of improvements in communications power will make computers look like donkeys on a towpath.

Four companies — Qwest, Level 3, ITXC and Williams Communications — are building the equivalent of 80 AT&Ts in the USA, according to North River Ventures. All their networks could carry Internet, voice or TV traffic. On top of that, AT&T, WorldCom and Sprint have begun work recently on new data networks, and technological advances are boosting the capabilities of the networks by the day. In 1985, it took six fibers in a fiber-optic line to carry a single TV broadcast of a football game, says Howard Janzen, CEO of Williams. Today, one fiber could handle 700 such broadcasts.

The bandwidth explosion will send shrapnel flying everywhere. It could drive the cost of a long-distance phone call to 1 cent a minute within a year, analysts say. Soon after, it should make full-fledged TV over the Internet possible, deconstructing the very identity of a TV channel. The bandwidth boom is already sucking life out of the consumer personal computer software industry: Investment and talent are flying out of software and into Internet applications, says Netscape Communications co-founder Mark Andreessen.

"Bandwidth is the drug of the day," says Dave House, president of Nortel. "Processor power (in computers) used to

be the drug of the day."

One nagging question is whether the boom will be too much bandwidth too soon, flooding the market before users need it, want it or can get it through comparatively slow connections going to most homes and small businesses. Those building the networks argue that there can never be too much bandwidth. Like new asphalt highways in busy suburbs, as soon as more bandwidth is built, people find new uses for it and it fills up.

THE NEXT BIG BANG

WHAT COULD IT MEAN?

1¢ LONG-DISTANCE, VIDEO EMAIL

by Kevin Maney, USA TODAY

The other side, though, warns of a coming shakeout. "If suddenly huge capacity comes on line, there's going to be a bloodbath" because the ratio of price to performance "is going to go through the floor," says Francis McInerney of North River Ventures. That scenario could mean vicious price wars that might collapse long distance phone rates to almost nothing and lead to a new round of communications mergers that trump even megamergers such as Bell Atlantic and GTE.

Explosion of networks

Only a year ago, the bandwidth builders seemed a little nuts. Their concept was still fresh: create nationwide or worldwide networks based on the high speed and massive capacity of fiber optics and the flexibility of Internet-style, packet-switched technology. Such networks could carry hundreds of thousands of times more traffic than is carried by existing networks and handle email, regular phone calls, Web pages,

video and even high-definition television signals.

High-profile start-ups such as Level 3 and Qwest are betting more than \$3 billion each on that future. Taking a different approach, Craig McCaw's Teledesic is building a \$9 billion space-based network with similar capabilities. More recently, traditional phone companies jumped on the bandwagon. Sprint announced its ION network; AT&T its INC network.

All this capacity is scheduled to be turned on between now and 2002.

Why place such bets? "It's not inconceivable that there will be a million-fold rise in Internet traffic by 2005," George Gilder, writer and bandwidth evangelist, told an audience at his September conference, Telecom. "There's just an awesome explosion of traffic, which means an awesome explosion of bandwidth."

Another driving force is advances in communications technology. For 20 years computers have advanced to the beat of Moore's Law, which basically says that the power of a microprocessor can double every 18 months while the price stays the same. During the same 20 years communications technology has been slow to change. No longer.

"We are freeing communications technology from the clutches of Moore's Law," says Mukesh Chatter, CEO of Nexabit Networks.

Out of the blue, Nexabit came up with terabit switch technology that can manage traffic on a network 100 times faster than current products on the market. In August, Nexabit picked up a \$20 million investment from Vulcan Ventures, which is controlled by Microsoft co-founder Paul Allen. Now Nexabit is racing to beat Juniper Networks, another start-up that has a similar product. Juniper is backed by 3Com, AT&T, Lucent Technologies and Nortel.

Such advances mean that new networks can be far more efficient than older networks. So a Level 3 sees an opportunity to steal business from older networks because it can charge less and still make a profit. Owners of older networks, such as AT&T and Sprint, realized they have to build newer networks to stay competitive with the upstarts. The cycle leads to the

explosion of bandwidth.

But all this new capacity brings with it a couple of problems.

Too much or too little

Problem one is sometimes known as the last-mile bottleneck. The major advances and investments have almost all been made in backbone networks — networks that carry traffic around cities, around the country or around the world. Almost all homes and small businesses are connected to those backbones by phone lines, which can handle just a trickle of data. It's as if the backbones are 32-lane megahighways packed with cars, and nearly all the exit ramps are side-walks.

Big corporations can afford better connections to the backbone. But corporations can't provide enough traffic to keep all the new capacity busy. To fill the backbones, homes and small businesses will have to have big, fast connections, too. That will come from cable modems and high-speed phone lines, but both are only now rolling out. "For three to five years, we're going to be stuck with what we've got" in terms of bandwidth connecting homes to backbones, says Armando Garcia, vice president of Internet media at IBM.

If homes and small businesses end up stuck with their sidewalk-size connections for too long, the communications companies could end up with a severe oversupply of capacity — a disaster for those companies. The companies, though, say that the capabilities their networks give the Internet will be so enticing, consumers will demand better connections and drive the companies that can supply them to move more quickly.

"Are we building too much network?" asks Williams' Janzen. After talking with Microsoft and others to gauge consumer interest, he says, "all the bandwidth being deployed won't even come close."

Others aren't so sure. "They've built it, and they're hoping like hell people will

"We'll broadcast off our camcorders. When you combine television with interactivity, you get a new medium," McInerney says.

come," says Mark Bruneau of Renaissance Worldwide.

The message is the medium

That brings up problem two. Some say that all the new bandwidth is a new medium, like television in its early days. To drive use of the medium, someone has to come up with a new kind of entertainment or information content that pulls people to that medium. But that doesn't seem to be happening yet. It's a chicken-and-egg problem. Like IBM's Garcia, content people won't aim for the new medium until it's widely available; but it might not be widely available until new content gives people a reason to demand it.

"There is a vacuum (bandwidth builders) hope will be filled by applications developers," Bruneau says. "Someone has to take the lead."

In the PC, as Intel made faster microprocessors, Microsoft worked in partnership to create software that would use that new capacity and give people reason to demand the latest PC. No hand-in-glove partnership like that is coming together in the high-bandwidth world.

Yet the question is more "when" than "if" content will catch up with the networks' capacity. America Online has launched a unit to develop high-bandwidth content. Road Runner and @Home, the cable modem companies, are searching for content that will drive use of their products.

It could be that none have to look as far as they might think.

"I don't think applications are a big deal — it's straight TV," says researcher McInerney. Broadband Internet could carry TV signals to PCs or TV sets.

Consumers could grab video from all over the world, just as they now get Web pages from anywhere. They could pluck individual shows off souped-up video Web sites. TV would never be the same. "We'll broadcast off our camcorders. When you combine television with interactivity, you get a new medium," McInerney says. That might drive enough demands for the new communications networks.

Triumph or train wreck?

If the twin problems get solved within these next four years, the effects could be phenomenal.

The cost of communications would dive while capabilities soar, just as has happened with computing. Video phones and video e-mail could quickly catch on in mass markets, analysts say. Entertainment would become on-demand and interactive. Telecommuting would be easier since computer connections from home could rival those in the office. Consumers and businesses would flock to the Net like never before.

The communications companies would fill their networks to overflowing. Their big bets would prove right. Founders of the start-ups — Level 3's James Crowe and Teledesic's McCaw — would become super-billionaires.

If the problems don't get solved, expect a train wreck. Over supply would kill many of the start-ups amid ruinous price wars. The big players would merge to try to become more efficient and tighten up the market. The bright broadband future would be put on hold, angering eager consumers.

Either way, the bandwidth explosion should provide fireworks. "We don't know what will happen. We've never seen something that grows 10 times a year compounded," says Eric Schmidt, CEO of Novell. "This is the beginning of a very, very big thing."

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"Are we building too much network?" asks Williams' Janzen. After talking with Microsoft and others to gauge consumer interest, he says, "all the bandwidth being deployed won't even come close."

MASTERS IN TELEVISION/VIDEO FOR DEVELOPMENT

Cross-disciplinary Course Links Development Studies with Media and Cultural Studies

Editor's note: This update from the University of Reading in the United Kingdom presents a wonderful graduate school model where students use media as a capacity building tool. Dozens of students from dozens of different countries go to dozens of different countries to teach media literacy and applications to improve dozens of neighborhoods. Who is going to develop this here?

Television and video can facilitate informal learning, aid the retrieval of knowledge within communities, and enable people marginalised by the mass media or by written literacy to express and represent themselves. It therefore has an important developmental role in both the North and the South which you will be able to explore through this Masters course.

Who is it for?

You may have a background of work in television and video production and wish to explore ways of using the medium developmentally, with marginalised people and communities. Alternatively you may work in development and want to explore the uses of video and television in your own work. Either way, this course could be for you if you have a good first degree or equivalent and a serious interest in development communication.

Please note that craft or technical skills such as camera-work and sound recording are taught within this programme only in so far as they are necessary for the successful completion of the course work. It is not a vocational course in relation to the worldwide television industry.

The course

The course is cross-disciplinary, linking development studies with media and cultural studies. It is characterized by its use of participatory learning methods, including seminars, workshops and small group activities. Central to the programme are practical field-work projects using video, in the UK and overseas.

The course lasts 12 months; it extends over three university terms of 10 weeks each, the 13-week summer vacation and short vacations in December (4 weeks) and March/April (5 weeks).

The core modules, taken in the first term, form the foundation of the programme. This part of the course includes the acquisition (or upgrading) of practical video camera and editing skills and an introduction to field-work. In the second term a choice of three specialist options provides the opportunity to pursue individual interests from a wide range of topics in rural development, extension and training.

Work on a field project begins in March, at the end of the sec-



ond term, and carries through the summer term. You will work in a small group directly with a local community, aiming to enable community members to represent themselves through communication processes including video in a way that facilitates their ability to take control of and transform their lives.

The final term of your course is occupied mainly by preparing a dissertation, an extended essay of 10,000-12,000 words through which you pursue in detail some aspect of the course and field-work project which is of particular interest to you or relevance to your work.

Assessment for the award of Masters degree is based on:

- ▲ Assignments undertaken within each course module
- ▲ A written examination (taken at the beginning of the second term)
- ▲ A presentation of your field project peer-assessed by course members and graded by an external examiner
- ▲ The dissertation.

Course Directors

Su Braden. Su Braden's principal concerns are with communication amongst underrepresented peoples and between them and others in authority. She has experience of training and participatory video projects with both NGOs and government ministries, is the author of three books on community media, and has directed and produced documentary and drama-documentary programmes for Channel Four Television in the UK.

Patricia E. Norrish, BA, PhD Reading. Pat Norrish's research interests are in interactive and participatory processes, and in issues relating to the production and presentation of communication media (print, video, radio) for people of differing cultural backgrounds. Before joining AERDD she lived and worked in

Thailand, Ethiopia and Ghana and has recently undertaken consultancy and training assignments in Kenya, Namibia, Sri Lanka and South Africa as well as in the UK, Europe and the United States.

SCHEDULE

FIRST TERM (OCTOBER-DECEMBER)

Core modules:

- ▲ Theories of Development, Society and Change
- ▲ Organization, People and Change
- ▲ Practical TV/video skills and fieldwork
- ▲ Communications and Understanding
- ▲ Culture and the Media
- ▲ Participatory learning and action workshop

CHRISTMAS VACATION

- ▲ Revision, reading and preliminary work on dissertation

SECOND TERM (JANUARY-MARCH)

Specialist options

- ▲ Management of participatory media projects, plus a choice of 3 modules from:
 - ▲ Extension methods in diffusion and technology transfer;
 - ▲ Gender planning for rural development;
 - ▲ Management of participatory learning interventions;
 - ▲ Social research methods;
 - ▲ Computer applications and statistics for research and evaluation;
 - ▲ Non-government organizations in rural development;
 - ▲ Planning and economic appraisal methods;
 - ▲ Management information systems;
 - ▲ Participatory approaches to rural development

EASTER VACATION

- ▲ Field Project

THIRD TERM (MAY-JULY)

- ▲ Edit project video
- ▲ Dissertation work
- ▲ Project presentations and assessment
- ▲ Final course evaluation

SUMMER VACATION

- ▲ Dissertation writing (deadline end August)

For further information, contact Su Braden at The University of Reading, 3 Earley Gate, Whiteknights Road, PO Box 238, Reading RG6 6AL, UK. Tel: +44 (0)118 987 5123; Telex: 847813 RULIB G; Fax: +44 (0)118 926 1244; or email at s.e.braden@reading.ac.uk

NEW IN PRINT

SUBJECT TO CHANGE: GUERRILLA TELEVISION REVISITED

By Deirdre Boyle, Oxford University Press., 286 pages, ISBN 0-19-504334-0

Before the Internet, camcorders and hundred channel cable systems, there was guerrilla television," reads the book jacket. "Part of the larger alternative media tide which swept the country in the late 1960s, guerrilla television emerged when the arrival of lightweight, affordable consumer video equipment made it possible for ordinary people to make their own television. Molded by the insights of theorists like Marshall McLuhan and Buckminster Fuller, influenced by the style of New Journalism practiced by Tom Wolfe and Hunter S. Thompson, and inspired by the content of the agonizing issues of the day, video guerillas plotted a utopian program to change the structure of information in America.

"In *Subject to Change: Guerrilla Television Revisited*, Deirdre Boyle tells the fascinating story of the first TV generation's dream of remaking television to include voices and visions absent from the broadcast media mix. The book opens by looking at the early underground video scene and its efforts at differentiating video from television and then explores how guerrilla television's more radical aspirations repeatedly were shipwrecked by the siren call of broadcasting. Interweaving the stories of three very different video collectives of the 1970s, Boyle focuses on the fortunes of Broadside TV, University Community Video, and the best-known most controversial guerrilla television group of the decade, Top Value Television, or TVTV. Founded by Michael Shamberg, author of the 1971 manifesto *Guerrilla Television*, TVTV came into being to cover the 1972 presidential nominating conventions for cable television, and its brash, hour-long tapes turned the worlds of both independent media and network television on their heads. Selecting sacred cows as sacrificial victims to its satire, TVTV tackled power-seekers in the realms of politics, religion, sports, and entertainment. The group's signature irreverence changed the landscape of television and its roster of young talent included Bill Murray, Lily Tomlin, John Belushi, Harold Ramis, comedy writer and producer Allen Rucker, and Michael Shamberg himself, producer of *The Big Chill*, *Pulp Fiction*, and other films.

"*Subject to Change* concludes with an examination of the larger forces operating in society that made creating an alternative system to commercial television virtually impossible. Boyle's story, a little-known chapter in the history of television, has keen implications for the future of free speech and public discourse in America. Promised that the information superhighway will take us to a utopia where electronic democracy will be ours, we may want to consider what happened to the last pilgrims to venture down that rocky road.

Subject to Change is the clarion call to public access television today to take a stand, make a difference, and celebrate community to avoid being marginalized by consolidating commercial media. 'If we're not making television, it's making us.'"

— Dirk Koning, Director, Community Media Center

Subject to Change

GUERRILLA

TELEVISION

REVISITED



Deirdre Boyle

"In the 1970s, during the astonishing rise of video as an independent medium of expression, Deirdre Boyle was there as a gung-ho participant. In the 1990s she is still there, now as a clear-eyed, amazingly meticulous chronicler of a turbulent period of media history."

— Erik Barnouw, Author, *Media Marathon*

MICRORADIO & INTERNET RADIO

A Powerful Synergy for Community Organizers

by Bob Russell

*T*his still about content. Good compelling content is what drives the need to have a medium for dissemination of information. Perhaps you create an in-depth piece on a critical political issue in your community, an article correcting the misinformation from your area's corporate media or some other interesting bit of news, data, information, knowledge or wisdom. Whatever it is, you need a medium of dissemination.

A technology that has become usable for people with access to computers and the Internet is audio programming or Internet Radio. The basic software to create and listen to audio programs via the Internet is available for free or real cheap. Of course you can get commercial software that ranges from a few hundred dollars to thousands, but it isn't needed to do good solid Internet audio. Many basic computers can be purchased which are audio ready in terms of hardware, or upgrades can be added to existing computers. For audio production your computer needs an input for a microphone for direct recording or audio input ports for connecting an external devices that you used to record your audio program. [See next page]

Audio on the Internet can be live, which is more expensive and technically challenging, or archives of radio programs, which is inexpensive and simpler technically.

Creating radio programs as archives provides your audience with the convenience of listening to your program on demand at the time of their choosing. The listener can tell other people about it, who can then tune in at their convenience. Your programs are there for anyone with Internet access 24 hours a day, seven days a week. And if they don't have their own computer they can arrange to go to a public library or other public facility with Internet access to listen to the program.

Microradio, also known as "pirate broadcasting," is another technology that may be legal to use after years of struggle with the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). In late January 1999, the FCC proposed new rules to permit low-power FM radio stations. Under these proposed rules, the FCC is defining Microradio as between 1 and 10 watts of power using the FM radio spectrum. For a few hundred dollars you can purchase the equipment to create a one-watt FM radio station that could cover an area of up to two miles. [See next page]

The value of information is often time sensitive. A simple example is: what is the value of the information about an available seat on an airplane that has not taken off yet? It is worth at least the monetary value of the ticket price. But what is the value of the information about the empty seat once the airplane has taken off? It is worth nothing to the consumer, but has some



Microradio and Internet radio used together can provide you and your community with a live broadcast medium and an archived media on demand. This is powerful synergy for community organizers with limited access to the dominant corporate owned media that most communities rely upon.

value to the airline for financial record keeping. So it's important to consider whether or not the information you're imparting is time sensitive. Thus, microradio is best for live broadcast of information that is time sensitive and Internet Radio archiving is best for audio information on demand.

Microradio and Internet radio used together can provide you and your community with a live broadcast medium and an archived media on demand. This is powerful synergy for community organizers with limited access to the dominant corporate owned media that most communities rely upon.

WebActive, www.webactive.com, is a good example of audio on-demand, a one-stop site for a smorgasbord of programs. Here you will find Jim Hightower Commentaries, CounterSpin (produced by FAIR – Fairness & Accuracy In Reporting), Pacifica Network News, Radio Nation (produced by the folks that publish *The Nation* magazine) and more. These are professionally produced programs that can give you a standard of radio programming to strive for.

A-Infos Radio Project and Free Speech Internet Television are sites (see next page) that contain audio archives produced by community activists and nonprofit organizations. Both sites allow free space for audio on-demand programs. You can produce your own program and upload it to one of their sites. Your program will then have an Internet address that you can publicize in your local community.

While I was finishing this article I was listening to author Danny Schechter talking about the electronic media's impeachment coverage on *Radio Nation* via the Internet. I could have been listening to one of your programs – go for it!

Bob Russell is co-director of the educational, non-profit Neahatwanta Center, 1308 Neahatwanta Road, Traverse City, MI 49686. Email him at center@traverse.com or visit www.nrec.org

The Federal Communications Commission Wants You!...or at least your comments on micro radio.

You have until June 1, 1999 to file your comments with the FCC. Don't think your puny, scrawny little voice doesn't matter...as the African fable goes, "Spiders united can tie up a lion."

*File comments in print: Federal Communications Commission, The Portals,
445 12th St. SW, Washington, DC 20024, or File on line: www.fcc.gov*

INTERNET & RADIO RESOURCES

Internet Audio Resources

<http://www.freespeech.org>

This site is a great web site to go to first, to learn how to produce your program. Once you create your show, they even provide you with space on their server for members.

Membership is free for non-commercial use with storage space of 25Mb with ftp access. Paid members receive more services and storage with commercial content allowed. Free Speech Internet Television is the first, and only, audio/video webcasting site created entirely by its members. You can join and begin broadcasting your own Internet "television channel" or "talk radio" show within days. Free Speech Internet Television uses Real Audio/Video as their standard format.

<http://www.real.com>

RealNetworks is the pioneer in streaming media technology on the Internet. You can download free or commercial software from RealNetworks to create and listen to audio files. You can also download free basic server software that supports up to 25 live sessions and on-demand streaming of audio and video.

The Radio Project

<http://radio4all.web.net/>

From their web site: The A-Infos Radio Project was formed by grassroots broadcasters, free radio journalists and cyber-activists to provide themselves with the means to share their radio programs via the Internet. Their goal is to support and expand the movement for democratic communications worldwide. They exist to be an alternative to the corporate and government media which do not serve struggles for liberty, justice and peace, nor enable the free expression of creativity. The archived material on their web site is available to anyone who wants it, free of charge.

They welcome submissions from all stations and independent producers in the service of these goals. All material is donated by its producers who are solely responsible for its content. The Radio Project Archive uses the MPEG audio compression system for its files. Instruction and download links to get free or commercial software for MPEG audio is linked from their site. For more information about MPG visit <http://www.mpeg.org/>

Audio on the Web— The IUMA Official Guide

by Jeff Patterson and Ryan Melcher

Peachpit Press

203 pages

Price: \$34.95

ISBN: 0-201-69613-4

Read the review of this book here:

<http://webreview.com/wr/pub/98/10/23/book-ends/index.html>

"As authors Jeff Patterson and Ryan Melcher explain, this book is the one they wish they had when they founded the Internet Underground Music Archive (IUMA). Their book is written in a simple, conversational style, and blankets the entire subject in a very readable and understandable way, especially for audio novices."

Internet Resources for MicroRadio

Radio4All

<http://www.radio4all.org>

This site connects you to the movement to reclaim the airwaves.

Micropower Broadcasting - A Technical Primer

<http://www.radio4all.org/how-to.html>

From the web site: "Many people still assume that an FM broadcast station consists of rooms full of equipment costing tens of thousands of dollars. The Micropower Broadcasting, Free Radio Movement has shown this to be untrue. Micropower broadcasting uses FM transmitters whose power output is in the range of 1/2 to 40 watts. Such transmitters have a physical size that is not greater than that of your average brick. These transmitters combined with other equipment including inexpensive audio mixers, consumer audio gear, a power supply, filter and antenna enable any community to put its own voice on the air at an average cost of \$1000-\$1500. This is far more affordable than the tens or hundreds of thousands required by the current FCC regulatory structure."

Federal Communications Commission [FCC]

<http://www.fcc.gov>

Link to the news release about proposed licensed low power FM radio.

http://www.fcc.gov/Bureaus/Mass_Media/News_Releases/1999/nrmm9003.html

— Bob Russell

Prometheus Radio Project Advocates Open Air Waves

by Sara Zia Ebrahimi

The Prometheus Radio Project is a not-for-profit association of micro-radio activists from Philadelphia and New York City. We draw our name from the Greek myth of Prometheus, who was punished for spreading the knowledge of fire among humans. In that spirit, we are a group dedicated to the democratization of the airwaves through the proliferation of non-commercial, community based, micropower stations. It is our belief that access to communications for all citizens is at the heart of a democratic society.

Community-based radio broadcasting was once accessible until the FCC's repeal of the Class D license in 1976. In the past five years a movement of microbroadcasters has emerged who have engaged in civil disobedience by broadcasting without a license. Our organizing efforts are having an effect; in January 1999 the FCC issued a Notice of Proposed Rule Making (NPRM) to create a low-power FM service.

Prometheus is currently composing comments on the rulemaking. We feel strongly that this new service be strictly non-commercial. We are encouraging other community media groups to file comments to that effect as well. One of the key components of our comments to the Commission is the proposal to guarantee at least one public access model radio station in each community or "market". This will insure that in the unfortunate case that the new service is primarily commercial there be at least one non-commercial community-based stations in each city. We are suggesting that these stations be run by low-power TV and community media centers.

We are looking for feedback from you as to whether or not this is something of interest to you all and how we may logistically begin the process in preparation. We are also preparing an "abridged guide" to the NPRM to aid in the process of submitting comments. A draft of our comments along with other information about Prometheus is available on our web page at <http://prometheus.tao.ca>. You can also email us at prp@tao.ca or call (212) 946-5251.

Strengthening the Arts Community Through Communication Technology

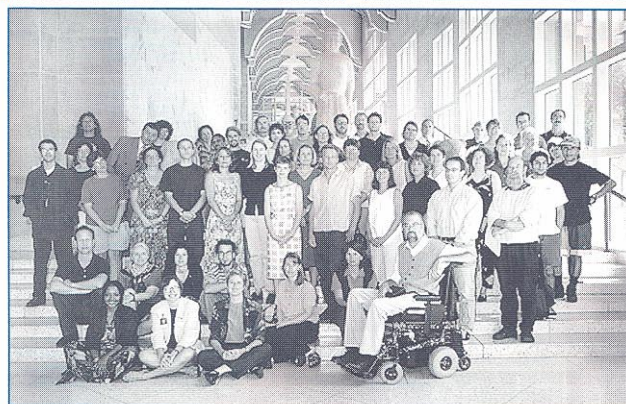
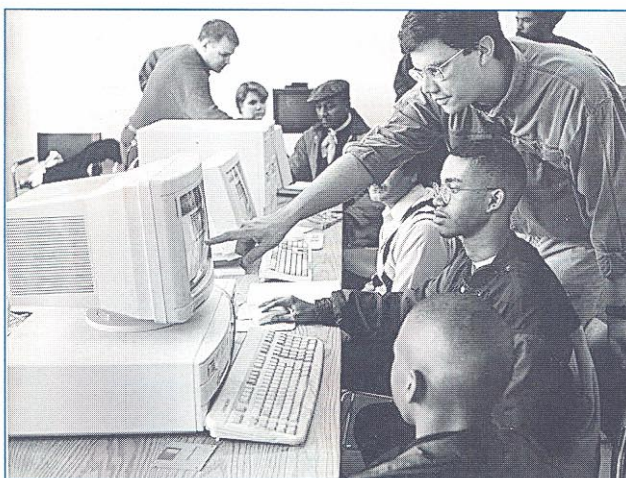
by Jan Koopman

One needs to tell the public access community about the fundamental value of access to information for the health of a democratic society. The Petition for Media Democracy states, "To flourish, democracy depends on the ability of people to communicate ideas, share opinions and get information."

Most information delivery and exchange is now and will continue to be via electronic means. The public access community has worked long and hard to promote its efforts; working with local governments on sharing of franchise fees, defending First Amendment rights to those who are uncomfortable with controversial programming, and training citizens in media literacy and technology to bring their opinions and issues into the public forum. All of us continue to bring in new people to join in our campaign to assure the vitality of our democracy. We all appreciate the value of partnerships to assist us in fulfilling our mission.

The Open Studio (<http://www.openstudio.org/> www.openstudio.org) project is one such partnership. Launched in 1996, the Open Studio project is a Benton Foundation program in partnership with the National Endowment for the Arts, with additional support from Microsoft, AT&T and the Ford Foundation, to build community through public service media. The Benton Foundation works "to realize the social benefits made possible by the public interest use of communications."

The project's ultimate goal is to insure the arts community's involvement in creating, using and accessing public space. To accomplish the goal, phase one of the project selected mentor sites to train artists and arts organizations. In this first



Top: Space One Eleven (AL). Center left: DC Commission on the Arts, Washington DC. Center right: Mattress Factory (PA). Bottom: Seattle Art Museum (WA)

phase begun in 1997, 10 Mentor sites from around the country provided web training programs for artists and arts organizations and taught basic skills needed for online communications and electronic publishing, such as how to use email and build web sites. Selected mentor sites included state and regional arts councils, artists' organizations and community networks. Because few organiza-

tions came into the program with both technological and arts backgrounds; most mentor sites partnered with other organizations to bring in a balance of skills. Also in the first phase, arts organizations, libraries and community centers were funded to establish more than 70 points of free Internet access around the country. These access points provide another avenue to make online arts and cultural information more accessible for the public, increase the amount of cultural material available online and expand the audience for such material. All Open Studio participants were part of the on-line "community of learners" to share their best practices and exchange their lessons learned while implementing their Open Studio program.

In phase two of the program, the Benton Foundation required mentor sites to target underserved artists and arts organizations without computer experience. Ten new Open Studio mentor sites were announced this past winter and all mentor sites, ranging from Buffalo to Hawaii and from state arts councils to art museums to public access television, met together in Minneapolis in February to share ideas, successes and failures and plan together to find ways to sustain this effort, while targeting the underserved artistic community.

The need to target underserved communities is documented in

The Benton Foundation publication *Losing Ground Bit by Bit: Low-Income Communities in the Information Age* (<http://www.benton.org/Library/Low-Income>) highlights the growing disparity between technology "haves" and "have nots" and the implications for the further fractionalizing of society if this trend continues. As digital technology brings new opportunities to many, it can

aggravate the poverty and isolation of some rural areas and inner cities as good jobs, quality health care and education, and technological tools move to the suburbs.

The lack of access to technology in underserved sectors of the artistic community can be ameliorated through the Open Studio project. By requiring phase two mentor sites to target underserved artists and arts organizations, the partners hope to make a positive impact in bridging the technology gap.

Media Working Group (MWG) in Covington, Kentucky was one of the initial mentor sites selected for the Open Studio project. MWG's project participants came from a wide area stretching from Cleveland to Atlanta and provided on- and off-site training. In phase two, MWG will work on building a communications network to link participants and plans to host an on-line gallery "opening" at the close of the project.

In contrast, the Community Media Center (CMC) in Grand Rapids, Michigan is a new mentor site and plans to target its training specifically within Grand Rapids, almost exclusively on-site and heavily targeted to underserved artists. The CMC is partnering with a downtown ecumenical homeless ministry, an existing arts program, and a large multidisciplinary contemporary arts center. The CMC is exploring sustainability through developing partnerships with local foundations that have already expressed an interest in community building through the arts. CMC is unique in that it incorporates not only the computing and technological capacity required by Open Studio, but also public access television and community radio. The CMC intends to use these forms of media to further promote the artists and arts that participate in the project.

Each Open Studio mentor site brings a unique skill set to the effort; each community is different, each curriculum is specifically designed to meet the needs of its participants. Mentor sites have discovered that partnerships must be developed where our interests intersect and that we really are more the same than different. The technologically and the artistically inclined speak the same language, only the dialects are different.

Those of us in the public access community have forged partnerships for many years for the purpose of guaranteeing citizen access to telecommunications media. We must be ready, willing, able and enthusiastic about developing new partnerships that allow all members of society to be enriched through the expression and appreciation of artistic endeavor.

A wealth of on-line information about the Benton Foundation (<http://www.benton.org>), the Open Studio Project (<http://www.openstudio.org>) and the National Endowment for the Arts (<http://arts.endow.gov>) is available. This project demonstrates another way that the public access community can be intricately involved in positive social change.

Jan Koopman is Development Director for the Grand Rapids [MI] Community Media Center. Contact her at 616.459.4788, or email jan@grcmc.org



MTN/Intermedia Arts (MN) exhibition opening for trainees Web site

OPEN STUDIO MENTOR SITES

The following organizations were selected to participate in Open Studio as Mentor Sites. These organizations are providing arts organizations and individual artists with the training to use the World Wide Web to communicate, share information, and link effectively to other arts sites on the Web.

Original sites

Break Away Technologies (Los Angeles, CA)
Center for Arts Management & Technology, (Pittsburgh, PA)
Colorado Council on the Arts (Denver, CO)
Charlotte's Web, (Charlotte, NC)
Leeward Community College (Pearl City, HI)
Minneapolis Telecommunications Network
and Intermedia Arts (Minneapolis, MN)
Media Working Group (Covington, KY)
New England Foundation for the Arts (Boston, MA)
Seattle Art Museum (Seattle, WA)
Space One Eleven (Birmingham, AL)

New sites

Community Media Center (Grand Rapids, MI)
Information Technology Resource Center
& Mexican Fine Arts Museum (Chicago, IL)
Ink People Center for the Arts (Eureka, CA)
La Plaza Telecommunity (Taos, NM)
Lewis-Clark State College (Lewiston, ID)
Media Alliance (San Francisco, CA)
Nebraska Arts Council (Lincoln, NE)
Squeaky Wheel/Buffalo Media Resources & Center
for Exploratory and Perceptual Art (Buffalo, NY)
Tucson-Pima Arts Council (Tucson, AZ)
Visual Communications (Los Angeles, CA).

SOCIAL MEDIA MOVEMENTS IN MESOAMERICA

‘What we need is a decentralized intercontinental network of alternative communication’

by Jeff Smith

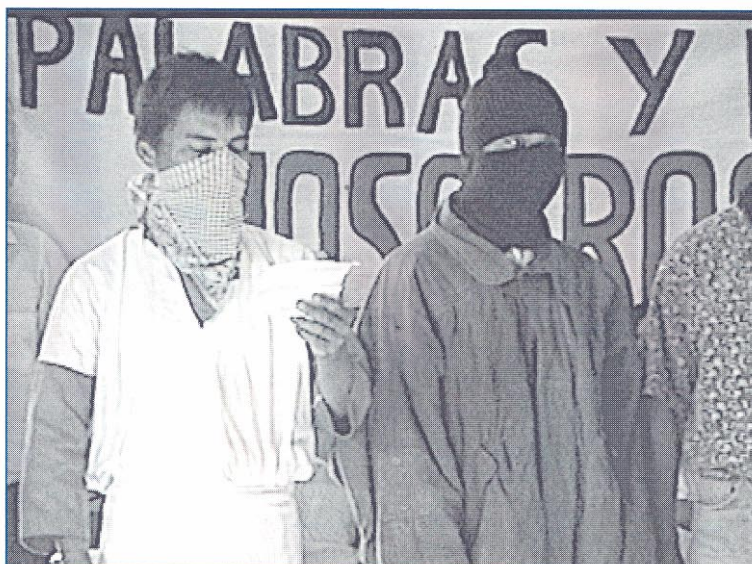
In 1996, at the global gathering against Neoliberalism, Zapatista spokesperson Marcos said “what we need is a decentralized intercontinental network of alternative communication.” This statement is all the more relevant when considering the current global consolidation of media conglomerates as documented in Ed Herman and Bob McChesney’s important book *The Global Media*.

Much can be learned from the visionary practices of the Zapatistas and other popular movements throughout Mesoamerica, a region that is blossoming in new social media movements. My first social media encounter was in 1992 while in El Salvador. The Peace Accords were about to be signed that would end a 12 year bloody counterinsurgency war. We visited a non-governmental human rights office to gather information on the peace process. While waiting to see the director we encountered the music of the pop/rock band U2 coming from one of the rooms. Curious to see what this was we came upon an video editing room, where Salvadorans were making documentary films of the current situation for English speaking audiences.

This video documentary outpost was a collaborative effort between labor groups, the university, human rights organizations, and the left party FMLN. Two years later while acting as an election observer in El Salvador I again encountered members of this video collective. Now they were producing videos for their own country as well. A few years of attempting to work with the private media taught them that they need to create their own if their message was to reach the masses.

Now when holding press conferences, they would not only organize them, they would tape them to provide access to Salvadorans who did not own TV’s. They would hold public video showings in neighborhoods all over the city to create greater news access. This strategy also proved to be a major organizing tool for these groups who sought a seat at the political table.

In 1995, I received a grant to purchase a Hi-8 video camera to



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monitor the elections in Guatemala. After spending a month taping and observing the election process, I was then required by the grant to give the camera to a local human rights organization. Having worked with the Mayan group CERJ [a Mayan acronym for Ethnic Communities of We Are All Equal] on many occasions they seemed like an appropriate group to receive the camcorder.

CERJ had been documenting human rights abuses since 1988. This documentation was in the form of written and verbal testimonies from victims or witnesses of human rights abuses committed in the countryside. Much of the population is geographically isolated from other communities and since there are 23 different Mayan languages in use in Guatemala, communication was at times difficult. Video

taping people’s testimonies now gave them another mechanism to share information, with images. Regardless of the language barriers, people could clearly understand the images.

The video footage was not only used with the UN human rights team in Guatemala, but again as a social networking tool that helped rural communities realize they were not the only victims of political repression. Since then new video projects have grown in the country.

One of the more ambitious efforts is by a group of women known as the Centro de Mujeres Comunicadoras Mayas [see sidebar next page]. They offer video and internet assistance to other indigenous people to broaden their free speech capabilities. In addition, they provide three-week seminars for foreigners who want to make documen-



taries about Mayans, assisting in cultural sensitivity and political consciousness raising.

The last example of social media is in Chiapas, Mexico where for the past two years I have been spending three weeks around the New Year's in Zapatista communities. It is here that I have experienced the mostly lively forms of social media in the region.

The Zapatistas (named after the Mexican revolutionary leader Emiliano Zapata) are a primarily indigenous movement in Chiapas that have been organizing for social change for the past 15 years, against what they often refer to as 500 years of oppression. They began the armed component of their uprising on January 1, 1994, the day that NAFTA would take effect. They refer to NAFTA as a death sentence, primarily because as an economic treaty it is further marginalized them on the state, national, and international scene. To date they have formed 26 autonomous communities in order to put forth their vision of a more participatory democracy for Mexicans.

The Zapatistas very early on recognized the importance of how people would perceive their movement. Therefore, it was important for them to take a proactive approach to communicating their ideas and demands. Utilizing the social networks that were created in North America during the NAFTA debates, the Zapatistas disseminated their messages throughout the world without ever leaving the Lacandon forest.

Today this has translated into more Chiapas and Zapatista websites than any other political movement in the world. How can this be? This is a group of a few hundred thousand Mayans in a remote area of Mexico. The answer has already been stated...they utilized existing social networks.

Two of the many sites for Accion Zapatista include www.utexas.edu/ftp/student/navel and www.ezln.org/

It is extremely important for those of us in materially privileged communities to not put the cart before the horse. What makes the social media movements so dynamic is that what they rely on, and build on, is the social networks they have created. This is achieved mostly through an awful lot of organizing and hard work, but just as importantly, they have been able to communicate the interconnectedness of their lives with our lives.

It was no coincidence that the day the Zapatistas uprising began was the same day that NAFTA was to go into affect. With the further globalization of the economy and information seen more as a commodity, it is extremely important that those of us who believe in social justice see social media as essential in our work. We can no longer afford to separate our work from that of communities all around the globe.

"It is the word which is the bridge to cross to the other. Silence is what the powerful offer our pain in order to make us small. When we are silenced we remain very much alone. Speaking heals the pain. Speaking we encounter one another."

— Zapatista communicate

Let us not be silent !

Jeff Smith is the director of the Grand Rapids Institute for Media Democracy, an affiliate of the Grand Rapids [MI] Community Media Center. He may be reached at jsmith@grcmc.org, telephone 616.459.4788.



CENTRO DE MUJERES COMUNICADORAS MAYAS

We are a non-profit access center run by indigenous Guatemalan women. We offer internet access and education to the rural Mayan community around Lake Atitlan. We support free speech, international awareness and local microenterprise. You can support women here by distributing this information and inviting people to come produce with them – a co-learning experience in culture, communication, human rights, women in development, and in shaping, shooting and editing a video documentary in a contemporary world of egalitarian media.

THE CENTER OF MAYAN WOMEN COMMUNICATORS presents three weeks of *Participatory Documentary Making*. Complete a documentary, from concept to product, with a Guatemalan partner. Share perspectives, ideas and credit for the work.

THEMES: women, education, rainforest flora and fauna, herbal healing, Mayan weaving and handicrafts, environment and local problems, healthcare, midwifery, traditions, gender, children...or present your own and we will find a coproducer interested in your topic.

USE OUR CAMERAS AND PROFESSIONAL EDITING BAY

Professional consultation in research and planning, using the equipment, working as a team, avoiding racist and sexist paradigms, interviewing techniques, cutaways, ethics and distribution. VHS master tape included – optional Hi8 or Betacam SP for extra charge

COST: \$1,200 USD

Includes: 3 weeks work, 5 day minimum each.

Workshops: theoretical and hands-on video shoots and hands-on co-edit optional housing with a family and 3 meals a day. Most transportation, translator, Spanish tutor available for an extra charge.

<http://rds.org.gt/cmcm/pardoc.html>

CENTRO DE MUJERES COMUNICADORAS MAYAS

<http://rds.org.gt/cmcm/>

Panajachel, Solola, Guatemala

(502) 762-2978

Critical Questions & Reflections. For almost 30 years, public access television advocates have worked passionately to utilize electronic media to facilitate individual empowerment and community change. From the Access pioneers in Canada's *Challenge for Change* project who sought to "improve communications, create greater understanding, promote new ideas, and provoke social change" to community television (CTV) centers around the U.S. today, access workers have endeavored to help people use media tools as a way to participate in civic affairs. The mission statements of many access centers around the country reflect CTV's community development vision. The main avenue most centers use to operationalize this vision is CTV training programs.

In the past several years, a number of researchers and practitioners have started to question if the training methods frequently used in CTV are aligned with the access mission of using media tools for social and community development.

In my experience working in and around access training over the past eight years, I have found that most CTV centers focus on quickly teaching the greatest number of people how to operate equipment to make television shows. To me, this indicates an emphasis on producing programming to fill access channels rather than on how to use media as a means to engage the public in processes of individual and community betterment.

Yet if the access mission is to use media as a means to facilitate empowerment, social change, or community development, then the focus of training programs should not be on technology, but rather on how people learn to work together to use technology to identify and communicate issues important to them, build critical thinking skills, and forge community coalitions in the process.

Similar ideas have arisen in recent CTV literature. Bob Devine states that "The point is that access training be

redirected in such a way that it involves social as well as technical learning... that the training sets up a 'culture of access' that values voice, the practice of culture, collectivized action, agency and social outcomes." Ron Burnett takes it one step further by sounding the call for new training models that include both makers and audiences: "It

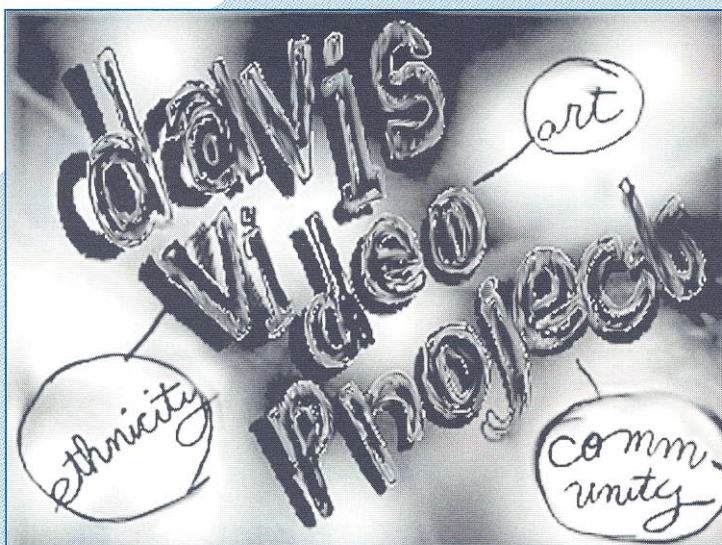
beyond its current focus of developing technical skills for producing local television programs to one that achieved the social benefits mission of CTV what would such a training program model look like? How would it be structured? What teaching methods and learning strategies could be used to achieve empowerment, social change, and community development goals? A pilot training program I created and implemented may be able to provide some insights into these questions.

The Davis Video Project (DVP). The DVP brought together eight young Davis [CA] residents (ages 16 - 22) from different backgrounds to form a multicultural video production team. The project focused on participants learning about each other, their city, and how to use the tools of television to stimulate community development around local, multicultural issues. Davis is a university town struggling to remain a cohesive community as it experiences the rapid population growth typical today in California. Located just 15 miles west of Sacramento, the state capital, Davis has a population of about 50,000. The vast majority of Davis residents are European

American. Over the past several years, however, the demographics of the city have been steadily diversifying.

DVP training sessions, which were two and a half hours long, took place twice a week for three months. Following the training, community screenings of participants' work occurred approximately four times a week for one month. The Davis Video Project was made possible by a grant from the Davis Civic Arts Commission in conjunction with in-kind donations of equipment, facilities, supplies, and administrative assistance from Davis Community Television (DCTV).

What follows is a *Reader's Digest* version of the project in which I briefly outline the DVP training model, highlight some project outcomes, and identify key implications evolving out of the Davis



BUILDING CAPACITY THROUGH COMMUNITY VIDEO TRAINING

THE DAVIS VIDEO PROJECT CASE STUDY

by jesikah maria ross

is also important to generate pedagogical models that will encourage open and honest exchange among participants in the production of videotapes as well as among the viewers who see them." John Higgins suggests reexamining training programs to surface and resolve inconsistencies between access objectives and CTV teaching strategies:

"In particular, the issue of training needs to be put on the table and scrutinized. Do the methods we employ when teaching people how to create video programs follow the stated goals and beliefs of CTV?...The process of evaluation and change is not easy. It is not appropriate in all situations. It does involve rethinking if the why we do training in CTV fits the how we do this training."

If access training were to move

Video Project.

Training Program Model. The DVP training program consisted of three interrelated components: video production, community organizing, and community screenings. Video production training focused on developing media literacy skills: the ability to access, analyze, and produce television. We read and discussed public access TV history, did critical viewing activities, screened and discussed a wide variety of media work, learned how to operate DCTV production equipment, and collaborated in teams to make short videos.

The community organizing component emphasized how to work as a group toward a common goal: bringing Davisites together to view and discuss videos which reflected the project participant's issues, ideas, and cultures. Each DVP participant was responsible for orchestrating a screening of the group's work at a community site. In the process, we learned how to conduct community research (i.e., identify sites, sponsors, and resources), create and implement outreach plans, generate promotional materials, and manage various logistics related to coordinating public events.

The community screenings, which were free and open to the public, were followed by discussions facilitated by the DVP team. To prepare for these public events, team members did role plays to build skills in facilitating group discussion, handling controversial comments, and speaking in front of groups. They also devised a format for introducing the video presentation, a series of questions to stimulate a community conversation, and protocols for how to answer questions from the audience.

Throughout the different training components, there was a focus on social as well as technical learning. The team spent time sharing personal stories, exploring feelings about the city of

Davis, and learning how to effectively participate in a group process. As DVP participant Mei-Ling put it: "I did learn about how to use the video equipment, but the technical aspect was not the reason why I am so affected by the project...In the group...I received an education about people in general. The various personalities that sometimes clashed, but most of the time inspired each other, could not have demonstrated better how people have the ability to come together and work towards a common goal."

Three strategies I used to facilitate social learning were teambuilding, collective learning, and participatory decisionmaking. Teambuilding activities — having meals together, collaborating on project activities,

potent learning community. As DVP team member Xavier notes: "We all decided to trust each other, and enter the circle with our most personal experiences or feelings about ourselves. I never really shared such deep feelings within myself with others...the environment was so warm and trusting...I found that all of our differences somehow made us closer and perhaps more trusting with each other...I have never been in a group like this before in my entire life, I became friends with people who are completely opposite from me. It gave me a little more hope for the world I live in."

What Happened: Individual and Community Impact. Working collaboratively, the project team created a 70 minute video presentation focused on cultural diversity in our community.

Their videos tackled a wide range of topics, including powerful personal stories addressing racism, rape, sexual orientation, and cultural stereotypes. The videos were shown in Davis churches, community centers, schools, local businesses, as well as on the public access channel. By having 18 screenings, the DVP team received broad visibility for their work, particularly in areas not typically presented with local multicultural media programs and individuals who do not receive cable TV.

The community screenings, packed with a diverse range of people, were followed by open discussions in which community members could relate their ideas and experiences or talk about issues brought up in the videos. Through this forum, the project participants were able to facilitate a robust conversation that touched on many more community issues than were covered by the 19 videos they presented. Just as the screenings sites varied, so too did attendance at the different community events. Some community screenings had twelve people in the audience while



The Davis Video Project brought together 8 young Davis residents (ages 16 - 22) from different backgrounds to form a multicultural video production team.

talking about a time when participants felt a sense of power—built trust, respect, and a sense of community among participants. Collective learning occurred by creating opportunities for participants to teach and learn from one another. The program promoted participatory decisionmaking by having team members deliberate and decide collectively on the project goals, timelines, and work plans. This deepened participant investment and ownership of project outcomes and helped build their skills and confidence in managing a group endeavor. All these strategies contributed to forming a close-knit and

others had about 40 attendees. On average, about 20 people attended each screening, and we estimate that about 275 people total came out to the community programs.

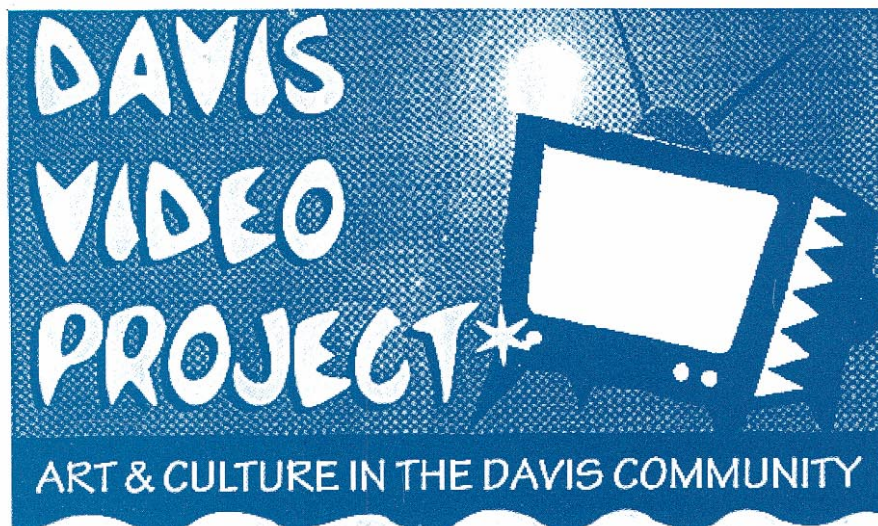
Judging from the 164 project evaluations collected from audiences at the community screenings, the DVP had a clear community impact. Bringing diverse community members together to view videos on local issues and cultures and engage in constructive discussions about mutual needs and concerns resulted in increased:

- ▲ dialogue on a range of cultural issues and histories;
- ▲ appreciation of cultural diversity in Davis, a quickly growing semi-rural community;
- ▲ awareness of cultural resources available to community members;
- ▲ understanding of the power and potential of self-representation through community media;
- ▲ recognition of video as a tool for initiating public dialogue and forging public opinion, resulting in an increased interest in becoming involved in community television.

Based on information collected through participant questionnaires, interviews, and journal writings, the DVP experience built team member's capacity (skills, confidence, and motivation) to:

- ▲ work across differences of gender, ethnicity, age, sexual preference and cultural backgrounds towards a common goal;
- ▲ make group decisions and work collectively;
- ▲ analyze and produce media messages;
- ▲ identify and address issues of concern in our community;
- ▲ use media tools for creative self-expression and community building;
- ▲ organize, publicize, and facilitate public events;
- ▲ speak in front of groups, including the city council, the city human relations commission, university and local high school classes, and social action groups.

Perhaps the most telling result from the project is that fact that all eight DVP participants indicated that they plan to continue making videos as well as participate in community groups. And they



The project stimulated interest in civic participation using media tools among participants as well as audience members. It engaged community members around local concerns and inspired project participants to continue to make positive change in their communities. In this way, the DVP achieved the empowerment, social change, and community development goals of the access television movement.

have. More than a year after completing the project, at least four team members are still making videos. Three others continue to be involved in community media work. One participant, for instance, now serves on the DCTV board of directors. Another works on an Asian-American community newspaper and a third is organizing a statewide Asian American Zine conference. They are making a difference in their communities. One participant, for example, decided to switch from pursuing a career in criminology to become a Teacher for America in a inner-city, multi-ethnic community.

The Davis Video Project resulted in individual and community capacity building. Participants increased their media literacy skills and ability to collaborate on community endeavors. They developed a sense of self-direction and agency regarding civic affairs as well as the confidence and ability to attain self- and group-identified goals. The project stimulated interest in civic participation using media tools among participants as well as audience members. It engaged community members

around local concerns and inspired project participants to continue to make positive change in their communities. In this way, the DVP achieved the empowerment, social change, and community development goals of the access television movement.

Implications

I started off this article with concerns about CTV training that led to the question: what would a training program model that encouraged empowerment, social change, and community development look like? Based on my experience with the Davis Video Project, some answers to the question include: teach community organizing in addition to equipment training; include community screenings and discussions as part of the training program; use teambuilding activities to create a learning community; focus on group process by encouraging collective learning and participatory decision-making (see sidebar next page). Additional considerations for such a program model include creating longer training programs and crafting programs that center on specific themes or content areas.

Access practitioners will immediately notice problems posed by the ideas outlined above. Longer training programs require reallocating scarce resources. Content-driven or theme-based training necessitates a philosophical shift from the current “content neutral” training orientation of many access centers. The model also implies skill sets that many trainers may not possess, such as facilitating group process and community organizing, as well as some understanding of experiential education and participatory learning.

These issues are not insurmountable. They do, however, require creative problem solving and a willingness to explore new ideas and practices. One step towards moving in the direction of this model would be to conduct training of trainers to build access practitioners’ knowledge and capabilities in areas such as community education and critical pedagogy, fields rich with history and research-based practices.

The training program outlined in this article is intended as a model. Models are useful as guides and are meant to be adapted according to different needs and resources. Like all models, further testing and evaluation will help make it more effective. And the more effective our training programs, the better able Access advocates will be in reaching their organizational and movement-wide vision.

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SUGGESTIONS FOR TRAINING STRATEGIES

Based on my experience with the Davis Video Project, here are suggestions for training strategies that build participants’ capacity for empowerment, social change, and community development.

▲ Develop a learner-centered curriculum.

The learner’s needs, experiences and goals are central to creating an appropriate training curriculum. Emphasis is placed on learner’s developing abilities and skills to diagnose and solve their own problems or address their current issues and concerns.

▲ Assess training needs.

Conduct a needs assessment prior to a training to identify the specific skills, information, values, etc. individuals, group or community desire to learn. Determine with participants the types of training activities that best meet their needs.

▲ Take on a facilitator role.

The trainer facilitates a process of competency-building and self-discovery for the learners, rather than imparts knowledge. Participants are viewed as the “experts” who best understand their issues, culture, ideas, and needs. The training process is developed as a mutual learning experience.

▲ Focus on activities that develop analysis, planning, and problem-solving skills.

Structure learning sessions as experiential problem-solving activities or tasks. Provide the simple structure of the problem-solving activity or task but allow the content to come mainly from the learners. Place an emphasis developing action plans that focus on community impact.

▲ Encourage questioning and investigation of reality.

Create an atmosphere where all participants (including the trainer) can express themselves freely, ask questions and learn. Provide opportunities for participants to express and understand their perceptions of reality with relation to others in the group. An atmosphere of trust and respect builds a learning community, develops participants skills in collaboration, and encourages collective effort.

▲ Encourage collective learning and decision-making.

Place a strong emphasis on problem-solving activities that require teamwork and open peer discussion. Provide opportunities for the group to make decisions based on their learning and experience. Devote time to sharing experiences among the group to develop participant confidence in analyzing and finding solutions to local problems.

▲ Integrate evaluation throughout training.

Integrate simple forms of evaluation (graffiti wall, anonymous card drop, like/dislike go around) throughout the training to ensure that the curriculum (activities, emphasis, time allocation) is meeting participant needs. Effort should be made to alter the training to satisfy participant needs as much as possible. Always address participant concerns in a public setting whether you can do something about it or not.

– jessikah maria ross

CITIZENS NETWORK PROJECT

Making a difference in the shift from an industrial-based economy towards a service-based one in Santo Andre, Brazil

by **Rodrigo Ortiz Assumpcao**

I'm writing from Brazil, from the city of Santo Andre to be exact. What I would like to share with you in this message is an ongoing project to use information and communications technology to help bridge the ever widening gap between the haves and the have nots in our society.

A significant part of Brazilian society is adapting to the Internet with all it brings in terms of speed, charm and advantages as ducks to water. This segment of Brazil, a richer and more developed segment is taking on the challenge of connectivity and information technology [IT] with glee and abandon. Our country already boasts one of the largest rates of Internet growth and computer presence on the globe.

Parallel to this process, however, the huge disparities that exist in the world's worst income distribution averages are getting deeper and graver. The challenge of dealing with illiteracy is greatly increased by having to deal at the same time with computer illiteracy. Building and strengthening the public sphere in a media and communication environment not committed to values such as distribution of wealth and power is made more and more difficult for those who do not navigate the Internet nor are connected to cyberspace. Gradually, access to basic citizenship rights are being more and more determined by the access to and domain of ITs. The issue is power and IT is, more and more, the medium with which power can be obtained, bargained and brokered. Thus, empowering communities to use IT seems to us one of the keys to a more equal, just and peaceful future.

With these perceptions in mind the Citizens Network Project started to take form in the city of Santo Andre in the state of Sao Paulo in the southeast of Brazil. This city is located in the metropolitan area of Sao Paulo. It is an industrial town of 700,000 people that presents dire contrasts such as can only be found when immense wealth meets immense poverty. So in this background of a medium sized city, with lots of difficulties and undergoing an economic shift from an industrial-based economy towards a service-based one the Citizens Network is helping to make a difference.

Trying to lead this process in a participatory and democratic manner, the local government has committed itself to change the usual priorities, to promote the development of the city through a greater and more just distribution of wealth and opportunities. One of the forms this government has chosen to do this is by supporting the Citizens Network Project.

The project tries to tap into public, private and international resources to set up a network of community computer centers, a media lab, school computer labs, libraries, and city hall's own

computer network acting as Internet Service Provider to the institutions of the civil society, and hosting their homepages.

The idea goes like this:

- ▲ Use the local government computer structure as a cost free ISP to encourage institutions such as regional organizations, unions, community centers, neighborhood associations, popular movements, community media organizations, youth groups, women's groups, etc. to set up their homepages;
- ▲ Use the local government's site as a nucleus of a larger and public city site built by joining in a public portal all the sites hosted by the mayorship and set up a community committee to run the show;
- ▲ Use some of the public school's 20 computer labs as part-time community computer centers to allow people to access all these sites, also to train enable the community to acquire the skills and abilities necessary to use IT;
- ▲ Set up Internet navigating rooms in the public libraries so the general public can use the city's public portal and all the sites connected;
- ▲ Set up a media lab to develop more refined skills such as web publishing, digital television, digital radio and graphic design, then open it to the institutions and to the general public;
- ▲ Use all these activities listed above to

lever private support in terms of sponsorship, donations of software and hardware;

▲ Seek international support, namely development funding from the European Union (funds soon to be released) and from other international donors;

▲ Consolidate the Project with technical support from universities, volunteers from the community and help from the society in general.

Some of these ideas, especially those dealing with community computer centers, were inspired by what we saw of the Playing To Win Network [now CTCNet] in the USA. We visited the original unit in Harlem, NY, the Clubhouse in Boston and also managed to meet and talk with Peter Miller, one of the organizers of the Network. All this was very inspirational for us.

The project is still in its initial stages, all the pieces of the puzzle are on the table, but most have yet to fall in together and build a larger picture, however the interest and involvement is growing geometrically. We have great hopes for our efforts.

The site for the city can be reached at
<http://www.santoandre.sp.gov.br>

Rodrigo Ortiz Assumpcao is a project coordinator at the mayorship of Santo Andre. Email him at rodassumpcao@santoandre.sp.gov.br, or visit Santo Andre's website at <http://santoandre.sp.gov.br>.

Building and strengthening the public sphere in a media and communication environment not committed to values such as distribution of wealth and power is made more and more difficult for those who do not navigate the Internet nor are connected to cyberspace.

THE COMMUNITY MEDIA FILES

i-Contact Video Network Promotes Using Video for Positive Change

<http://www.gifford.co.uk/i-contact>

i-Contact Video Network is a non-profit initiative set up to provide support for those using video for positive change. This includes progressive, alternative and independent video makers and video activists. Although based in the UK (Bristol), i-Contact Video Network is keen to cooperate and work with individuals and groups all over the world.

Who are we?

i-Contact is a non-profit group producing and supporting video work that tackles the issues the mainstream media ignore. Through i-Contact those wishing to use video come together with those who will benefit from it. We are about respecting and reflecting the genuine concerns of communities and suggesting ways forward.

Why was i-Contact established?

A tiny minority decide what is and isn't seen on television. i-Contact wants to make it as easy as possible for anybody to make programs. It advocates genuine public access to TV and individual empowerment.

A new approach through a collaborative process, i-Contact brings a fresh approach to media, communicating with, rather than at, people. By involving those who know about and are affected by the issues in the production process, people are brought together, skills are transferred, and the media is demystified. i-Contact wants anyone to feel able to use video to express his or her concerns and visions.

i-Contact also runs an email list for video journalists/activists, alternative and community video.

WebRing for Alternative Video Helps Spread the Word

<http://www.ainfos.ca/>

A - Infos News Service has set up a WebRing for Alternative Video and invites anyone with a suitable website to join it.

What is a WebRing?

A WebRing is a group of sites with something in common who decide to cooperate. Each member of the ring puts a WebRing banner somewhere prominent on their site. This banner allows people visiting the site to visit other sites on the Ring.

It also allows them to get a list of all the sites on the WebRing and a short description for each of them. In this way all the members of the ring can increase the traffic to their site. The beauty of WebRings is that the people who visit your site as a result of them are already interested in the subject of your site.

For more information about WebRings go to
<http://www.webring.org/>

To find out more or join the Alternative Video WebRing go to
<http://www.gifford.co.uk/i-contact/webring.html>

more on page 24

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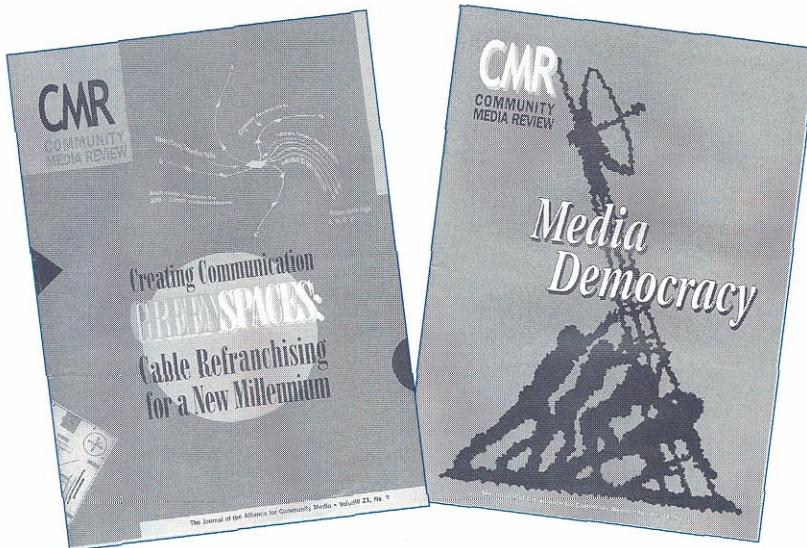
To find out more about how you can have a booth, sponsor an event, advertise in the conference program, and get your materials into the hands of over 800 community media professionals and volunteers...
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"As a circle of light increases,
So does the circumference
Of darkness
Around it."
— Albert Einstein

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Aboriginal Peoples Television Network Approved in Canada

The Canadian Radio-Television Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) announced that effective September 1999, the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network (APTN) will be carried on basic cable throughout Canada.

"I am tremendously excited by the opportunity the aboriginal people of Canada have been given. This historic decision will be a major step in building bridges of understanding between aboriginal and non-aboriginal people of Canada," stated Abraham Tagalik, TVNC Chairman. The CRTC decision paves the way for the world's first national, public aboriginal television network dedicated to stories by and about aboriginal people across Canada and around the world. "I applaud the progressive position taken by the CRTC to ensure that telecommunications in Canada fulfills its role to protect and nurture Canadian culture," added Mr. Tagalik. APTN is an enormous challenge for aboriginal Canadians. APTN is committed to delivering a full spectrum of high-quality programming that will build and sustain a dedicated audience.

APTN will broadcast approximately 120 hours per week of programming in English, French and aboriginal languages. APTN will build on the success of TVNC (Television Northern Canada). TVNC has provided quality aboriginal programming in northern Canada for the past seven years. The success of TVNC has created an awareness of the importance of communicating aboriginal perspectives. It is logical that the success in the North should be extended across Canada. The new network will be national in scope and will allow aboriginal people from all regions of Canada to share their stories.

*Do all human beings have the right to see, to hear,
to speak, to communicate and to access information
regardless of their life circumstances, their
political or religious beliefs or their ability to pay?
We say 'Yes!' If you agree with us, join...*

The Campaign for Media Democracy

What you can do:

- ☐ *Sign the Petition in Support of Media Democracy*
- ☐ *Support the Public Policy program of the Alliance —
become a Public Policy Affiliate or Council member*
- ☐ *Write, call or visit your governmental representatives*
- ☐ *Write letters to the editor in support of media access or call in
to a radio talk show and talk about the importance of media democracy*
- ☐ *Talk to your friends about the issue — speak to community groups
or invite someone to speak to your group about media democracy*
- ☐ *Join an Alliance Chapter — Attend a Regional Conference
— Become active in your Alliance!*



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